to limits: *"de minimis"* minimal supports are allowed (up to 5% of total agricultural production for developed countries, and 10% for developing countries). Amber, Box expressed in terms of "Total Aggregate Measurement of Support", was required to be reduced by 20% for developed countries in 6 years (1995-2000) and by 13.33% for developing countries in 10 years (1995-2004) in equal annual instalments.

Any domestic support that would normally be in the Amber Box, is placed in the Blue Box if the support also requires farmers to limit production under Article 6.5 of the Agreement. At present there are no ceilings on spending on Blue Box subsidies.

The Green Box is defined in Annex 2 of the Agreement, and in order to qualify, Green Box subsidies must have either no, or at most minimal, trade-distorting effects or effects on production, and must be government funded. Green Box subsidies are allowed without limit also provided they meet policy-specific criteria set out in Annex 2, and include regional development and environment protection and direct income support programmes that are not targeted at particular products.

(c) India, like all WTO Members, is allowed to provide subsidies to its agricultural sector provided the government funded programmes meet the criteria set out in Annex 2 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture and such subsidies are accounted for as those falling within the Green Box.

Surplus post in tea board as per SIU

2998. SHRI TARINI KANTA ROY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance has identified 354 posts as surplus in the Tea Board and has recommended abolition of 235 posts and gradual redeployment of the balance 119 posts;

(b) if so, whether there is any recommendation by the Tea Board in this regard; and

(c) what is Government's response to the issue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) The Staff Inspection Unit

(SIU) of Ministry of Finance had initially identified 354 posts as surplus in Tea Board, and recommended abolition of 235 posts and to redeploy or allow normal waste out of the balance 119 posts. SIU had further clarified that on reconsideration the revised number of posts found surplus is 355, the number of posts for abolition is 237 and 118 posts were for redeployment.

(b) Based on the original report, Tea Board has agreed to abolish 224 posts as 11 posts were filled up by promotion of eligible employees which would be treated as posts meant for redeployment. Of 119 posts meant for redeployment, Tea Board has requested the Department of Commerce for retention of 44 posts.

(c) The matter is under examination.

Export of Minerals

2999. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that large scale export of minerals is being allowed without heading the long-term requirement of metallurgical industries within the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the necessity of export of minerals in the context of depleted foreign exchange reserves more than a decade ago is no longer there; and

(c) in the above context and the fact that a large number of MoUs by steel producers seek to treble the capacity in the country, will the Government stop or phase out the export of minerals particularly iron ore immediately?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN) (a) The export of major minerals, namely, iron ore, chrome ore and manganese ore is not unbridled. The export of iron ore with iron content up to 64% is free and iron ore with iron content more than 64% is restricted through designated State Trading Enterprise, namely, MMTC Limited. Likewise, there are quantitative and qualitative restrictions on export of chrome ore and manganese ore.